

Completing surveys with residents as part of a neighbourhood assessment

The PEACE team survey and notes for use

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Preface

The PEACE team has been working since January 2019 to trial and develop Contextual Safeguarding tools as part of safeguarding interventions.

Consistent with this intention, the project's Theory of Change describes work across intra- and extra-familial contexts relevant to young people at risk of extra-familial harm.

This has included work with neighbourhood locations and communities in a variety of ways, including:

- Consulting with community members as part of the Local Authority's response to incidents of significant extra-familial harm to young people
- Reaching out to local voluntary and community sector organisations, including partnering with a youth club
- Supporting work by Children's Services and Community Safety to understand and address themes about where in the borough young people were most in need of protection
- Analysing themes about locations in connection with the cases referred to the project
- Completing a neighbourhood assessment

As part of this neighbourhood assessment, the team surveyed residents within the neighbourhood. To do this the team adapted a [survey template developed by the Hackney Contextual Safeguarding Project](#) (see Page 6 below) and gave thought to how best to administer this survey. Nicola Toh, a practitioner from the project, reflects below on the steps the team took to prepare, complete and analyse the survey.

How and why we completed surveys with residents – Nicola Toh, PEACE team practitioner

What was the purpose of surveying residents?

The PEACE project decided to complete a neighbourhood assessment due to concerns raised by parents that their children were being groomed and exploited within a particular area.

We wanted to understand how safe residents, particularly young residents, felt in the area, and the extent to which adult community members felt able to contribute to young people's safety in the area. We designed a survey that we could complete with residents and or professionals that lived and worked on the estate.

How did you go about writing the surveys?

The surveys were solely around safety and willingness to get involved in making the community safer. When creating the surveys, we insured to try to take out any jargon and try to keep it short. As we wanted a general picture about safety on the estate, we didn't need personal details of residents on the survey. We decided that we didn't want the residents to feel, or be, exposed when giving their answers about the estate.

Once we agreed the questions that were on the survey, we then needed to think about how we would complete the surveys on the estate.

How did you reach people?

We completed the surveys during the winter, so didn't expect to meet many people outside.

We researched the community centre to see what activities they ran throughout the day and in the evening to see if we could survey residents, and or young people that attended the centre.

We thought about whether and when it would be appropriate to knock on resident's doors, and after we consulted with the housing area manager, she gave us a key fob for us to get into the blocks on the estate. We decided to go in the middle of the afternoon, so as not to disturb people's evenings, and because we thought people might be reluctant to open the door to someone they did not know when it's dark.

What did you need to have when doing the surveys?

We wanted to present ourselves primarily as youth workers from the PEACE project, but also to be transparent about our connection to Hounslow Council.

We decided when completing the resident surveys and door-knocking, we would complete this in pairs and wear our PEACE project hoodies and t-shirts.

We also looked at the little, practical things such as having clipboards and pens to fill out the surveys.

How did you introduce yourselves to residents?

When introducing the survey to the residents it is important to explain exactly who you are, and why you are completing the survey. We were explicit to residents that the surveys were anonymous and that we did not need their names or door numbers. However, businesses and professionals on the estate who took part in the surveys could be identified in the assessment if they gave their consent. We also needed to ensure that if any resident wanted to contact us after the survey with additional comments or concerns, they could contact us via our email address.

How did you find the process?

I enjoyed completing the surveys and finding out the views of the residents, it gave us a better understanding of what it is like to live on the estate. It was also great to get positive feedback about the community and neighbours: too often we can focus on the negatives and not the positives!

How did you analyse the information from the surveys?

After completing the surveys we compiled a spreadsheet that broke down the information we received under the following categories:

- residents' concerns for young people on the estate,
- suggestions residents had about solutions to address child welfare concerns,
- residents' willingness to be involved in efforts to make the estate safer,

We then looked for themes across the information collected, e.g. positive comments about the community.

We then used this information when writing our neighbourhood assessment.

The survey template developed by the PEACE team

Residents / Professionals Survey

This survey is anonymous for all residents, please do not write any names or identifying details on the form. However, ask those who work in the area (professionals and business owners) if they are willing to be (a) contacted in the future, and (b) referenced in the report.

Date: [can be prepopulated]

Location: [specify where within the neighbourhood without compromising anonymity]

1. Do you feel safe within [name of area relevant to the assessment]?

Yes No Unsure

Please tell us more:

For practitioner impressions
(circle as appropriate):

Young Person 11-18

Young Adult 18-25

Adult

Parent

Professional

Business employee / owner

2. Would you say this is a safe neighbourhood for young people?

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3. What things could make the estate safer?

CCTV	Regular meetings with Police
Lighting	Regular meetings with Housing
Community Fun Days	Any other suggestion?

4. Would you like to get more involved in making the community safer?

Yes No Unsure

Any further details:

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Final notes and acknowledgments

We hope the above is helpful for any practitioners or projects seeking to work with community members to improve the safety for young people within a specific neighbourhood. We are always interested to hear how these documents have been used and adapted by other practitioners. Please contact us at contextual.safeguarding@beds.ac.uk or peace@hounslow.gov.uk.

The work above was produced as part of an embedded research project with the PEACE project. Research Fellow Katie Latimer worked with the project 1 day a week between April 2019 and August 2020. As an embedded researcher, Katie worked alongside colleagues in the PEACE team to understand the team's work, goals and positioning, and to partake in a learning process: how can the Contextual Safeguarding approach and principles *practically* inform the work of an exploitation intervention team?

The referral form enclosed here is one way in which the team has sought to operationalise Contextual Safeguarding. It is accompanied by other resources, including a redesigned neighbourhood assessment template, available on the Contextual Safeguarding [website](#).

Special thanks to Nicola Toh for capturing the processes the team went through when using the resident survey form, and to the whole PEACE team developing the project's work with communities and locations.